Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 EB-08 OES-09 DOE-15 SOE-02 COME-00 /118 W

-----046310 030723Z /16

R 021318Z AUG 78 FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8726

CONFIDENTIAL BANGKOK 22038

EO 11652:XGDS-1 TAGS: OTRA, PEPR, SREF, VM, CH, TH SUBJ: THAI VIET NAM RELATIONS

- 1. DURING BRIEF INITIAL COURTESY CALL ON ACTING FONMIN WONG TO PREPARE FOR PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS, AMBASSADOR TOOK OCCASION TO QUESTION WONG ON HIS VISIT TO VIET NAM LAST WEEK.
- 2. WONG INDICATED THAT, AS PRESS REPORTED, PROGRESS WAS MADE WITH REGARD TO REPATRIATION OF THOSE VIETNAMESE LONG IN THE COUNTRY. HE NOTED THAT THE VIETNAMESE HAD IN THE PAST AGREED ON THIS QUESTION IN JOINT COMMUNIQUE AND THE THAI SIDE WAS INSISTENT IN MOVING TOWARD IMPLEMENTATION. CONSEQUENTLY BOTH SIDES HAVE AGREED TO FORM A JOINT COMMISSION TO STUDY THE PROBLEM AND TO ESTABLISH THE MODALITIES FOR REPATRIATION. WONG ALSO INDICATED HOWEVER THAT FURTHER TALKS WOULD BE NECESSARY WITH REGARD TO CONCRETE DETAILS ON THE ACTUAL ESTABLISHMENT OF THE JOINT COMMISSION. WONG PROFESSED TO BE SANGUINE THAT THERE WOULD ULTIMATELY BE PROGRESS ON THIS ISSUE. HE WAS GREATLY IMPRESSED WITH VIETNAMESE COOPERATIVE ATTITUDE.
- 3. WITH REGARD TO VIETNAMESE/CHINESE TENSIONS WONG SAID CONFIDENTIAL.

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IN HIS DISCUSSIONS, VIETNAMESE WERE LOOKING FORWARD TO THE DISCUSSIONS WITH CHINESE AT THE DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER LEVEL. THE VIETNAMESE ALSO INDICATED THAT WITH REGARD TO THE US, THEY HOPED THERE WOULD BE MOVEMENT TOWARDS NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS. WONG INDICATED THAT THE THAI DELEGATION DID NOT PROBE DEEPLY ON EITHER QUESTION SINCE ITS PURPOSE WAS TO FOCUS ON BILATERAL ISSUES.

4. WONG, WHO SPENT THREE DAYS IN SAIGON DURING HIS VIET NAM VISIT ALSO NOTED THAT THE ATMOSPHERE THERE IS STILL MUCH MORE "LIBERAL" THAN IN HANOI. HE WAS STRUCK BY THE APPARENT ATTEMPTS BY THE VIETNAMESE TO ENCOURAGE TOURISM. HE ALSO WAS SURPRISED AT THE EXTENT OF THE ACTIVITY ATTENDING THE OIL EXPLORATION IN VUNG TAU. HE SAID THAT IT ALMOST LOOKED AS IF THEY WERE CREATING A NEW PORT CITY THERE. ABRAMOWITZ

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X Capture Date: 01 jan 1994 Channel Indicators: n/a

Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS

Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note: Disposition Action: RELEASED Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW

Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014 Disposition Event: Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BANGKO22038
Document Source: CORE

Document Unique ID: 00 Drafter: n/a

Enclosure: n/a Executive Order: X1 Errors: N/A

Expiration: Film Number: D780317-1070 Format: TEL

From: BANGKOK Handling Restrictions: n/a

Image Path: ISecure: 1

Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197808104/aaaadjmg.tel

Line Count: 71 Litigation Code IDs: Litigation Codes:

Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM

Message ID: 8a260358-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc

Office: ACTION EA

Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a

Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a

Reference: n/a Retention: 0

Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED Review Content Flags:

Review Date: 18 may 2005 Review Event: Review Exemptions: n/a

Review Media Identifier: Review Release Date: n/a Review Release Event: n/a **Review Transfer Date:** Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a

SAS ID: 1553488 Secure: OPEN Status: NATIVE

Subject: THAI VIET NAM RELATIONS TAGS: OTRA, PEPR, SREF, VM, CH, TH

To: STATE Type: TE

vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/8a260358-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc

Review Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014